

# China's Great Pyramids Controversy

*Despite speculation about the existence of great pyramids in China, archaeologists and bureaucrats have refused to consider even the rumours about such structures.*

*But recent pictorial evidence proves that China's pyramids are indeed real, rivalling those of Egypt and Central America for their age, size and significance.*

In 1920, historian Henri Cordier wrote: *"China's ancient past is denied both to us and its population. Its grand past is slowly unveiled, similar to how Egypt's was revealed. Later on, one learned of buildings, standing stones and other monuments that were not mentioned by the Chinese historians (as part of their history)." The largest country in the world was, and is, largely there to be discovered. Though accepted as a great civilisation, its ancient treasures were barely known. One rumour spoke about pyramids that could be found in desolate areas.*

One such pyramid was photographed in 1947 by Col. Maurice Sheehan from a DC3 airplane. His story was printed in *The New York Times* in March of the same year. Sheehan stated it rose to about 300 metres, its sides 450 metres long. The next day, the *Los Angeles Daily Express* ran Sheehan's photograph. But a few days later, the Associated Press received a letter from the authorities of the province of Nankin, stating *"the existence of such pyramids is not backed up by evidence"*. That press release discredited Sheehan's story, as most authors and researchers believed Sheehan had exaggerated. French author Patrick Ferryn stated: *"the photographs do not reveal any markings that would allow us to measure the true dimensions. Its height was probably an incorrect estimate. It is probably a burial vault; it definitely looks like one."*

The 1950s and '60s had shown the world the existence of many 'ritual platforms' and 'artificial hills' in China, identical to pyramids in appearance except in terminology. 'Pyramids' have a magical appeal to many. Bruce Cathie also became interested in the Chinese pyramids and wrote on the subject in *The Bridge to Infinity*. Cathie reported that a member of the Chinese Embassy had officially informed him there were no such things as pyramids in the Shensi province: *"There are a few tumuli (burial hills), but no pyramids."* He knew nothing about the existence of pyramids in China.

A letter from Chinese authorities, dated 1 November 1978, addressed to Cathie, stated the scientists had learned that the so-called "pyramids" were burial tombs of emperors of the Western Han dynasty. *"Records give a different version of the emperors' lives. As the graves have not been scientifically analysed and no markings were seen on the ground, it is difficult to formulate conclusions."*

Still, there were historical records that spoke of pyramids. The head of the Ts'in-family, Che Houang-ti (the "Yellow Emperor", the first to hold that title), changed Chinese society dramatically. He built the Chinese Wall upon listening to an oracle that prophesied a "barbarian" would attack China. By 1974 the Emperor had again risen to popularity with the discovery of his subterranean mausoleum. It contained no less than 6,000 terracotta warriors that were stored in combat mode and believed to be intended as protection for the deceased Emperor in his new existence. Historian Sseuma Ts'ien (135-85 BC) wrote that this Emperor united China and destroyed all ancient writings as a sign of the new era that was born. Some old books were apparently saved, mainly in Taoist temples.

Che Houang-ti ordered 700,000 people to build him a pyramid at Lin-t'ong, between Hnan and Si-ngan. The "Segalen mission", a tour of China that Segalen made in 1913, measured the pyramid's height at 48 metres, encompassing five terraces. One side measured 350 metres, 120 metres longer than the side of Great Pyramid at Gizeh, Egypt. With 1,960,000 cubic metres, it is fourth largest pyramid in the world. The pyramid at Cholula, Mexico, and the two largest pyramids at the Gizeh plateau precede it.

The Emperor possibly died in 210 BC. When his treasures were stored in the pyramids, it was decided the workers would be sealed inside the pyramid so no one could reveal where the pyramid was situated. Plants were planted on its sides so the pyramid would eventually take on the appearance of a natural hill. Sseuma Ts'ien wrote that subterranean

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streams of lead engulfed the pyramid, the ceiling depicted the sky, and the ground showed the expanse of the Empire. Crossbows were aimed at trespassers—a burglar alarm which wasn't that successful, as General Hiang Yu was able to loot the pyramid in 207 BC.

The Segalen mission revealed more pyramids and tombs along the River Wei. These were dated to the Han period, following that of Emperor Che Houang-ti. As these were relatively recent pyramids, the scientists did want to entertain the notion that these "burial hills" might be "pyramids", but, as mentioned, there were rumours of taller and more ancient ones.

In 1912, Fred Meyer Schroder and Oscar Maman travelled to Shensi. They not only dealt in tobacco and candles but also supplied the Mongolians with weapons. Their guide along the Chinese-Mongolian border was a monk, Bogdo ("the holy one"), who told them they would soon stumble upon some ancient pyramids. Though he himself had never seen them, he knew some could be found around the old town of Sian-Fu. *"Mountains as high as the sky. They are no ordinary burial vaults, though emperors or empresses might be buried inside."* Bogdo knew seven pyramids had been discovered.

Schroder estimated the tallest one measured 300 metres high, its sides 500 metres long. This would mean this pyramid was the largest in the world, twice as large as the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. The volume was 20 times as large as the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. Both were built north-south/west-east.

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*"In the past, they were apparently partly covered with stones, but those have disappeared. A few stones lie at the bottom. It is an earthen pyramid, with giant gullies on its sides. They were the reason why the stones loosened and fell down. Its sides are now partially covered with trees and shrubbage. It almost looks a natural hill. We rode around the pyramid, but did not discover any stairways or doors."*

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A US Air Force map detailing the area around the city of Xian, made with the use of satellite photographs, shows at least 16 pyramids. Xian, the ancient Sian-Fu, presently inhabited by more than six million souls, is much older than Peking (Beijing). Once it was the capital of the Empire: it was recognised as the umbilicus of China's civilisation.

Hartwig Hausdorf and his company of fellow travellers landed



at the new Xian airport and, driving to the city and their hotel, saw one pyramid which stood along the road. It had been discovered a few years earlier, when Xian's airport was relocated and a road to the city was engineered.

This pyramid would not even be the icing on the cake for Hausdorf who was passionate about China's ancient history. In October 1994 he had climbed one pyramid and was able to count 20 more pyramids, all lying in the immediate vicinity. Yet, in March 1994 he had climbed that same pyramid and had seen only some of those pyramids. *"It's amazing how the weather in March didn't allow me to see those pyramids. In October it was perfectly clear weather, and more revealed themselves."*

Hausdorf is not really flabbergasted no one knew about the existence of such pyramids: *"China has still a lot of mysteries—even the local population quite often isn't aware of them. It's a small miracle I received the go-ahead to enter some 'no go' areas. I was, in fact, the only one who was granted such favours. I assume there are two reasons for this. I regularly visit China with a group of tourists. In 1993, I became acquainted with Chen Jianli, an avid researcher of his country's past. He assured me he would try and*

*open a few doors inside the Chinese Ministry of Tourism. In fact, in March 1994 I was able to visit some former 'no go' areas in the Shaanxi-province. I passed around some copies of my German book, Die Weisse Pyramide (The White Pyramid), to the right*

*people. I talked to archaeologists who at first denied any pyramids existed, but finally recognised they did exist. I was most pleased when the same people gave me further permission to enter other 'no go' zones when I returned in October 1994. I never expected any of this would happen to me. But it seems it had to happen eventually. Following decades of rumour, someone had to clear the picture."*

To detail his problems, in March 1994 Hausdorf met Professor Feng Haozhang (a prominent member of Beijing's academic circle), his assistant, Xie Duan Yu, and three col-

leagues. At first they denied the pyramids' existence. But when Hausdorf showed them three photos of three different pyramids, they caved in. Hausdorf described his encounter: *"It was as if I had entered a hive. The photographs I took in both March and October 1994 are the proof that squelched five decades of rumour. Most scientists denied the existence of pyramids in China. If any scientist still clings to that, show him my photographs."*

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Still, China will not give up all its mysteries that easily. Several pyramids probably remain undiscovered, their existence perhaps even unknown to the Chinese scientists.

One mystery, however, definitely lingers on. At the end of the Second World War, pilot James Gaussman had to adjust his course due to engine problems. He tried to reach his base in Assam, India, having dropped off supplies inside China. As he turned around one mountain-top, a giant pyramid rose in the valley in front of him. It was white, made out of metal or stone. According to Gaussman it would have fitted perfectly in any fairy tale. A jewel-like stone crowned its top. *"Though I wanted to set my plane on the ground and investigate, there was no way I could land it on that terrain."*

Gaussman flew three times around the structure, photographing the pyramid with the same camera with which he'd just photographed hostile troop movements. During his debriefing in Assam, he told his intelligence officer the world would be stunned when they learnt about that pyramid. *"There was nothing around it, just this pyramid in the middle of nowhere. I think it's extremely ancient. Who built it? Why? What's inside?"*

Hausdorf and all in search of the "White Pyramid" have never been able to rediscover it. Gaussman's photograph was developed and filed in a military archive where it remained for the next 40

years until Australian Brian Crowley published the photograph in his book, *The Face on Mars*.

Who built these pyramids? Bruce Cathie thinks he might know more. Using his harmonics, he believes there is a mathematical connection between the pyramids in China and the pyramids of Egypt. The number 16944 is present inside the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, he states, and there are 16944 minutes of arc between the longitude of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh and that of the tallest pyramid at Shensi. Their dispersal along the river reminds him of the placement of the pyramids in Egypt along the River Nile. Cathie believes that this shows the pyramids were built by the same people. He also wonders whether the decades-long silence surrounding the pyramids was to allow the Chinese scientists to discover whether such a connection did indeed exist.

Hartwig Hausdorf spoke to Professor Wang Shiping who believes the pyramids have an astronomic alignment and could be dated to 1,500-500 BC. Records of that time speak of the emperors descending from heaven in flying

dragons.

And so Hausdorf has stumbled upon another fairy tale, of emperors descending from heaven, which scientists think is impossible. Rest assured, Hausdorf will also try to find out whether that 'rumour' is real or not. ∞

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